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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/735,978	12/15/2003	Mark Steven Franke	KCC 4972 (17,515A)	4244

321 7590 01/25/2007  
SENNIGER POWERS  
ONE METROPOLITAN SQUARE  
16TH FLOOR  
ST LOUIS, MO 63102

EXAMINER
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HAND, MELANIE JO

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3761

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	01/25/2007	ELECTRONIC

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Notice of this Office communication was sent electronically on the above-indicated "Notification Date" and has a shortened statutory period for reply of 3 MONTHS from 01/25/2007.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

uspatents@senniger.com

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/735,978

Applicant(s)

FRANKE ET AL.

Examiner

Melanie J. Hand

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 November 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

## Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on November 15, 2006 has been entered.

### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments with respect to the rejection of claims 1-25 under 35 U.S.C. 103 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

With respect to applicant's arguments regarding the rejection of claims 1-25: Applicant argues that neither Rosch nor Christoffel teaches a garment shell that is releasably and refastenably attached to an absorbent assembly. While Examiner agrees that Rosch does not explicitly teach that the two entities are attached in such manner, Rosch teaches that they are joined and does not explicitly exclude any method of such joining. The fact that the drawings appear to depict only a permanent joining does not exclude a temporary releasable/refastenable fastening arrangement. However Examiner disagrees with applicant's argument that Christoffel does not teach a refastenable and releasable attachment means for such a shell and absorbent assembly. The record is clear regarding Christoffel's teaching of a releasable and refastenable hook and loop fastening system that attaches two clothing entities at the front and back waist areas, and teaches that other methods of attachment known in the art can also be employed. (¶0074) Thus Christoffel is and has been interpreted on the record as teaching that attachment

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methods such as the joining taught by Rosch is equivalent to the releasable and refastenable method taught by Christoffel. The motivation of record to combine these two devices that seek to solve the same problem of supplying an absorbent garment that has the appearance of an outer garment while being easily removable is also clear and is of record. The motivation clearly arises from at least one of the two references, rather than only the instant application as is argued by applicant.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

Claims 1-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rosch et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,115,847) in view of Christoffel et al (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0087137).

With respect to **Claims 1,4,5,7,16-18,24,25**: Rosch teaches an active wear trunk garment 110 having a liquid-permeable trunk cover 114 having inner surface 111 and outer surface 113 and a waste containment structure 142 comprising a liquid-impermeable backsheet 158 having a garment-facing surface, a liquid-permeable bodyside liner 156 and absorbent core 160 sandwiched therebetween. ('847, Col. 8, lines 8-16) Trunk cover 114 has front waist, rear waist and crotch regions 131,133,149 as can be seen in Figs. 1-4. As can also be seen in Figs. 1-4, waste containment structure 142 is disposed generally within trunk garment 110. Rosch teaches that trunk cover 114 is joined to elastic members 143,145 at the waist regions ('847, Col. 10, lines 45-49), therefore Rosch does not teach that trunk cover 114 is refastenably attached at the front and rear waist regions.

Christoffel teaches a girl's swimsuit wherein an absorbent pant/bottom portion 98 is releasably attached to the upper portion/bodice 42 at the front and rear waist areas via hook

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and loop fasteners 92 to secure the pant portion and upper portion about the waist of the wearer and for greater ease in applying and removing said swimsuit, ('137, ¶¶ 0071-0074) therefore it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize hook and loop fasteners to releasably and refastenably attach the outer cover 114 and garment 110 taught by Rosch at their respective front and rear waist ends so as to more easily apply and remove garment 110 as taught by Christoffel, such that the absorbent assembly taught by Rosch is selectively detachable from and reattachable to the garment shell.

With respect to **Claim 2**: Rosch teaches leg openings defined by seams 187,189 in cover 114. ('847, Col. 11, lines 1-5) As can best be seen in Fig. 4, garment 110 has leg openings spaced apart inwardly from leg openings defined by cover 114.

With respect to **Claim 3**: Rosch teaches leg elastics 136,138 for pant structure 112. ('847, Col. 12, lines 25,26) Cover 114 is in the form of swimming trunks and as can best be seen in Fig. 4 is designed to hang loosely about the legs of the wearer.

With respect to **Claims 6,11**: As can best be seen in Fig. 4, the crotch region of garment 110 is located inwardly of the crotch region 149 of cover 114 and not attached. Further, Rosch teaches cover 114 is configured as a pair of swimming trunks, wherein said trunks, as stated previously are intended to hang loosely about the legs of the wearer, whereas the garment contains leg elastics to fully encircle the legs of the wearer.

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With respect to **Claims 8,9**: As can best be seen in Fig. 4, Rosch teaches that garment 110 has a waist opening defined by waist regions 131 and 133 corresponding to the waist regions of cover 114.

With respect to **Claim 10**: Rosch teaches pant structure 112. ('847, Col. 12, line 5)

With respect to **Claim 12**: The absorbent garment 110 taught by Rosch has a waist opening, at least one outer leg opening, and laterally opposite side seams extending generally from the waist opening to said at least one outer leg opening, the absorbent garment being releasable and refastenable along at least a portion of each of said side seams. (Fig. 5)

With respect to **Claims 13,14**: Since Rosch teaches both non-releasable/refastenable and releasable/refastenable side seams ('847, Col. 11, lines 1-5, 14,15), though Rosch does not teach using them in combination, it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify said side seams so as to contain both refastenable and non-refastenable portions, for example having a non-refastenable portion located above fasteners 96 on each side seam, including a configuration in which the releasable/refastenable portion of each side seam comprises 25-50% of the length of the seam.

With respect to **Claim 15**: Please see the rejection of claim 1 in addition to the following: Rosch teaches that cover 114 has front panel 115 and back panel 121 having side edges 117 and 119 (front) and 123 and 125 (back). ('847, Col. 10, lines 57-65)

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With respect to **Claims 19-21**: Rosch teaches pant structure 112 having left and right side panels 126, 128 respectively that extend from the front waist region 120 to the rear waist region 122. ('847, Col. 12, lines 4-12) Panels 126, 128 are ultrasonically bonded and have non-refastenable seams so as to allow fastening of a front side panel to a corresponding back side panel, thus defining leg openings, as can be seen in Figs. 5, 6. ('847, Col. 12, lines 18-21) As can also be seen in Figs. 5 and 6 pant structure 112 has front and back panel areas in addition to the side panels. In another embodiment shown in Fig. 5, Rosch teaches tape fasteners that are refastenable, thus Rosch teaches that panels 126, 128 could also be releasably and refastenably attached.

With respect to **Claims 22, 23**: Since Rosch teaches that the side panels are elastomeric and are capable of stretching to between 10-500% of their original length ('847, Col. 8, lines 55-60), Examiner is asserting that they are capable of creating an overlap in the range set forth by applicant in claim 23 (thus also falling within the range set forth in claim 22), in both the cases of non-refastenable and refastenable seams.

### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Melanie J. Hand whose telephone number is 571-272-6464. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs 8:00-5:30, alternate Fridays 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tatyana Zalukaeva can be reached on 571-272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Melanie J Hand  
Examiner  
Art Unit 3761

January 18, 2007

TATYANA ZALUKA  
PRIMARY EXAMINER

